

APPLICANT(S): DA SILVA GONCALVES, Fernando Manuel et al.
SERIAL NO.: Not yet known
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please add or amend the claims to read as follows, and cancel without prejudice or disclaimer to resubmission in a divisional or continuation application claim 11 indicated as cancelled:

1. (Currently Amended) A process ~~Process~~ for the reduction of alcohol content of beverages ~~which is performed in a circuit with the following stages comprising the steps of:~~
 - a. circulating ~~circulation of~~ the beverage from a feed tank, pressurized at maximum 40 bar, tangentially to a NF membrane to obtain two streams:
 - i. one of retentate that does not cross the NF membrane,
 - ii. one of permeate that crosses the NF membrane and is composed of water, ethanol and ~~[[some]]~~ salts;
 - b. recombining ~~recombination of~~ the retentate in the feed tank with the beverage to be processed;
 - c. distilling ~~distillation of~~ the retentate, at atmospheric or reduced pressure, leading to a top stream rich in ethanol and a bottom stream of dealcoholized permeate;
 - d. recombining ~~recombination of~~ the dealcoholized permeate in the feed tank with the retentate/beverage;
 - e. totally, or partially compensating for ~~total or partial compensation of~~ the volume loss due to the removal of ethanol by the addition of purified water.
2. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1 wherein the membrane is ~~membranes are~~ adjusted to allow selective permeation of ionic species according to their charge.
3. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~claims 1 to 2~~ wherein the ionic species can be total or partial removed from the bottom stream of dealcoholized

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permeate [(1.c)].

4. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~claims 1 to 3~~ wherein the membrane is ~~membranes are~~ regenerated, with 90% minimum flux recovery, by tangential circulation of water at room temperature.
5. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~claims 1 to 3~~ wherein the membrane is ~~membranes are~~ regenerated, with 90% minimum flux recovery, by tangential circulation of water at a temperature of 50-60 °C.
6. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~claims 1 to 3~~ wherein the membranes are regenerated, with 90% minimum flux recovery, by tangential circulation aqueous solutions of weak bases, with controlled pH between 8 and 11, as a function of ~~depending on~~ cleaning time.
7. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 6 wherein a pH between 8 and 9 ~~for long cleaning~~ is used for a long cleaning time.
8. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~the previous claims wherein the operation is~~ carried out in a continuous or a batch mode.
9. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~the previous claims~~ wherein the final product is obtained by the mixture of the original beverage with beverage treated by this process.
10. (Currently Amended) Process in accordance with claim 1, ~~the previous claims~~ wherein

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the final product presents the same organoleptic characteristic of ~~characteristics as the~~
original beverage, ~~namely body, flavour, aromatic intensity and aromatic profile.~~

11. (Cancelled)

12. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein said beverage is wine, beer, cider, mead or sake.

13. (New) The process of claim 10, wherein the organoleptic characteristic is body, flavour,
aromatic intensity or aromatic profile.